

Express Mail No. ER 109417114 US

U.S. PATENT APPLICATION

SKI NECK TIE

Inventor: Stephen M. Kaczmarek

Attorney Docket: 185p-Kaczmarek

TITLE

SKI NECK TIE

INVENTOR

Stephen M. Kaczmarek

CROSS REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATION

This application claims the priority and benefit of US Provisional Patent Application No. 60/415,185 filed 09/30/2002 in the name of the same inventor, Stephen M. Kaczmarek and entitled SKI NECK TIE.

STATEMENT REGARDING FEDERALLY FUNDED RESEARCH

This invention was not made under contract with an agency of the US Government, nor by any agency of the US Government.

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

This invention relates generally to clothing and specifically to promotional neck ties.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

The manufacture of clothing designed for promotional purposes or to be otherwise eye catching normally involves the use of printing on a relatively two dimensional clothing surface. In general, the most common example is the silk screened tee-shirt. Such items are often given away as promotions or sold based upon the human desire to identify with a favorite person, idea, musical group or so on. Other items of clothing are occasionally silk-screen printed as well.

For example, neck ties having printing on the front surface may used in a variety of ways: they may have written messages, logos, images, lights, noticeable patterns and so on. Messages include religious messages or sports cheers. Logos include the marks of famous products, sports teams and so on. Images may be the faces of famous real or fictional individuals, lights may be used to create a “twinkling” Christmas tree and so on. In addition to printing, in the case of neckties such messages may even be woven into the fabric of which the tie is made, then the tie constructed so as to display the message properly. It is also possible to change the planform of the necktie, for example, US Design Patent D432,757 issued October 31, 2000 to Yoon for “Necktie” shows a sharply pointed tip. However, this necktie, like others, sits more or less flat to the torso of the wearer. In addition, it does not “resemble” anything other than a necktie.

In general, all of these methods are “two-dimensional”: the necktie lies flat to the torso of the wearer. Furthermore, neckties are not generally made to resemble anything other than in fact a necktie itself.

Neck ties need not be so limited, however. It is possible to make neckties in non-two dimensional patterns and shapes.

Promotion of skis and ski related items has its own problems. For example, visual effects are always important in sales and promotion, yet it is not normally possible to bring a set of skis to a meeting with a client. Sales representatives need some eye-catching device to replace skis in such situations. Often, brand recognition of a ski may extend strongly to the ski itself as an image, with its eye-catching graphical designs, but the name may be much less evocative.

Similarly, endorsements made by professional skiers or other ski professionals may be weakened for the same reason: the individual pro may not be able to carry their skis everywhere without looking ridiculous, yet the image of the skier and the ski would be absolutely the most positive image which the advertiser could hope for.

It is also desirable to send the typical skier home with a memento of a good ski trip, resort, or event, but the typical memento does not then advertise the trip further to the skier's co-workers, friends, acquaintances, and passers by. Showing a trail map, logo, or other distinctive ad right on the happy skier would be advantageous.

Stores, resorts, ski teams at the international, college, high school, professional and other levels, ski makers, ski equipment makers, ski destinations such as nations, states, cities, as well as Olympic events, competitive events, tournaments, or even businesses and organizations peripherally related to skiing, and of course skiers who simply wish to identify their avocation may all benefit from an easy visual way to identify themselves.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

General Summary

The present invention comprises a necktie in having an insert which causes the end of the necktie to flare out from the torso of the wearer, much like the tip of a ski. The result is a neck tie that resembles a ski, and may advantageously be decorated with the markings of a ski equipment manufacturer, a ski resort or other ski related entity or product. The necktie may itself also be printed with designs such as those found upon a ski, or have attachments which resemble attachments to a ski.

The invention further comprises a necktie which is shaped in planform so as to more closely resemble the end of a ski. For example, cross country skis tend to be narrow and possess a relatively sharp point: such a neck tie may be fashioned with the insert previously mentioned and a planform which is also narrow and pointed. Other possible planforms of necktie may resemble a down hill ski (relatively rounded on the end and possibly wider at the end than in the middle), a snow board (having a very wide planform and bluntly rounded end), a water ski, wake board, surf board, kite board, skate board, scooter, and other types of skis and boards.

The invention further comprises a retrofit insert which may be placed into a pre-existing necktie in order to render it ski shaped.

The invention further allows advertising by means of the necktie.

Summary in Reference to Claims

It is a first aspect, advantage, embodiment, and objective of the present invention to provide a necktie insert comprising: a flat body having a raised end; the insert dimensioned and configured to fit within the end of such necktie, the insert being shaped so as to resemble the tip of a ski in elevation; the insert when disposed within such necktie deforming such neck tie to

resemble the tip of a ski in elevation.

It is another aspect, advantage, embodiment, and objective of the present invention to provide a necktie insert wherein the insert is further shaped so as to resemble the tip of a ski in planform.

It is another aspect, advantage, embodiment, and objective of the present invention to provide a necktie insert wherein the insert is made of a pliable material having sufficient flexibility to allow the raised end to flatten when worn under clothing.

It is another aspect, advantage, embodiment, and objective of the present invention to provide a necktie comprising a long folded cloth having an end and having an interior space within the folds; and an insert dimensioned and configured to fit within the interior space at the end, the insert being shaped so as to resemble the tip of a ski, the insert deforming the neck tie so as to resemble the tip of a ski.

It is another aspect, advantage, embodiment, and objective of the present invention to provide a necktie wherein the insert resembles the tip of a ski in planform.

It is another aspect, advantage, embodiment, and objective of the present invention to provide a necktie wherein the insert resembles the tip of a ski in elevation.

It is another aspect, advantage, embodiment, and objective of the present invention to provide a necktie wherein the cloth is printed with a colorful image selected from the group consisting of: advertising material, an image of a ski, the trademark of a ski related organizations, a trail map and combinations thereof.

It is another aspect, advantage, embodiment, and objective of the present invention to provide a necktie wherein the cloth is printed from tip to tail with the colorful image.

It is another aspect, advantage, embodiment, and objective of the present invention to provide a necktie wherein the insert is made of a pliable material having sufficient flexibility to allow the raised end to flatten when worn under clothing.

It is another aspect, advantage, embodiment, and objective of the present invention to provide a method of advertising comprising manufacturing a necktie having an end resembling the tip of a ski; and wearing the necktie.

It is another aspect, advantage, embodiment, and objective of the present invention to provide a method of advertising wherein the step of manufacturing the necktie to have an end resembling a ski tip further comprises the following substep: inserting an insert dimensioned and configured to fit within the end of the necktie, the insert being shaped so as to resemble the tip of a ski, the insert being disposed within the necktie and deforming the necktie into its own shape.

It is another aspect, advantage, embodiment, and objective of the present invention to provide a method of advertising further comprising the step of: pre-printing the necktie with a colorful image.

It is another aspect, advantage, embodiment, and objective of the present invention to provide a method of advertising wherein the step of pre-printing the necktie with a colorful image further comprises: selecting for the image one member selected from the group consisting of: advertising material, an image of a ski, the trademark of a ski related organizations, a trail map and combinations thereof.

It is another aspect, advantage, embodiment, and objective of the present invention to provide a method of advertising wherein the step of pre-printing the necktie with a colorful image further comprises: printing the necktie from tip to tail with the colorful image.

It is another aspect, advantage, embodiment, and objective of the present invention to provide a method of advertising wherein the step of wearing the necktie further comprises: wearing the necktie at a time or place when carrying a ski would be inappropriate.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

Fig. 1 is a plan view of a PRIOR ART necktie, showing the visible area of the necktie.

Fig. 2 is a hidden-line/transparent plan view of a necktie according to a first embodiment of the present invention, showing the visible area of the necktie.

Fig. 3 is a plan view of a necktie according to the first embodiment of the invention, showing the tail of the necktie.

Fig. 4 is a side view of the insert of the invention according to a second embodiment of the invention, showing the three dimensional nature of the insert.

Fig. 5 is a cross sectional side view of the invention worn over a shirt so as to be visible.

Fig. 6 is a cross sectional side view of the invention worn over a shirt but under a coat or other garment and flattened thereby so as to be hidden.

REFERENCE NUMERALS

- | | |
|---|-------------------|
| 2 | Prior Art Necktie |
| 4 | Necktie |
| 6 | Insert |

8	Tail End
10	Insert
12	Curved End
14	Flat Body
16	Necktie
18	Raised End
20	Tail End
22	Shirt
24	Coat

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Fig. 1 is a plan view of a PRIOR ART necktie. Necktie 2 is very pliable cloth or other fabric having two ends, only one of which is visible. The visible end is usually comparatively broad in respect to the parts of the necktie which are not visible: the middle and tail of the tie. The broad visible end creates a visible area of the tie which may be easily viewed: it is customary to make the visible area of a pleasing color, pattern or design. In addition, it is known to have images, art, messages and other materials on the visible area of the necktie. The visible area ends in a fairly standard “point” although other shapes are known. The colorful image or colorful design may comprise advertising material, an image of a ski, the trademark of a ski related organizations, a trail map and combinations thereof.

The necktie is normally comprised of several folds of the cloth or fabric. Thus the visible

surface/visible area/visible end is of cloth or fabric which is wider than the actual visible surface: the excess folds under the visible area at the edges. In most commonly available neckties, the two folds at the edges are wide enough that they in fact meet near the middle of the necktie behind the visible surface, where they may be connected to one another by means of sewing, or by means of stitching, or by means of a small number of stitches (“tacking”), adhesives, or by other means. In general, such folding creates a tie having a lateral cross-section much like a “squashed tube”. If the folds of excess material do not meet in the middle, the interior of the “tube” may be partially open at the back. Some types of ties do not have such folds of excess material and are thus entirely open at the back. However, even neckties having an entirely open back to the visible surface are normally comprised of multiple ply or multi-layered: the visible surface is one piece of fabric, sewn or stitched at or near its edge to a second piece of fabric which serves as backing. In either case, a substantially flat internal space exists between the folds or plies of the necktie. In the commercially successful presently preferred embodiment, the necktie is made from 100% silk, but similar materials such as polymers, wools, cottons, linens, and composites thereof and similar materials may be used instead. For added resemblance to a ski, extremely high gloss materials which are normally considered unsuitable to a necktie might be used in very alternative embodiments: soft plastics, rubbers, etc. Care for the tie when used with a pliable insert becomes identical to care of any other tie of the same material.

In prior art neckties, the visible area of the necktie lies in conformity to the contours of the wearer’s underlying clothing. Under normal conditions, this means that the tie will be roughly vertical and almost flat to the front of the wearer’s torso.

Fig. 2 is a hidden-line/transparent plan view of a necktie 4 according to a first

embodiment of the present invention, showing the visible area of the necktie 4. It will be seen that in planform, the necktie 4 is made to resemble the front end of a ski. In the embodiment shown, the front end is rather rounded, thus tending to resemble a traditional, straight downhill ski. However, in other embodiments, other planforms are possible. For example, cross country skis tend to be narrow with an end which rounds out to possess a relatively sharp point at the extreme tip: a neck tie may be fashioned to resemble this by having a planform which is also rather narrow and also narrows in a curvilinear fashion to a tip which is relatively pointed. Other possible planforms of necktie may resemble a more modern down hill ski (relatively rounded on the end and possibly wider at the end than in the middle), a snow board (having a very wide planform and bluntly rounded end), a water ski, wake board, surf board, kite board, skate board, scooter, and other types of skis and boards.

Visible in the hidden line/transparent view provided in Figure 2 is insert 6. Insert 6 is fashioned of a material such as a plastic, other polymer, wood, metal, or other similar materials able to hold a thin three dimensional shape. In the presently preferred embodiment and best mode now contemplated for carrying out the invention, insert 6 is a plastic. Insert 6 is approximately the same size in plan as the visible surface of necktie 4. The term “approximately the same size” as used herein indicates that insert 6 will fit into the inside of necktie 4, either between folds as discussed previously or actually inside of the plies of necktie 4 in those cases in which necktie 4 has no folds. Insert 6 may be disposed within necktie 4 at the time of manufacture or at a later time when a quantity or individual necktie 4 is modified. Thus, for advertising purposes, an entity might purchase a number of neckties of ordinary cross-section and a number of inserts, then place the inserts within the neckties.

In the method presently used with the invention, the customer is an organization which orders a quantity of the ties and supplies to the manufacturer a colorful image/design in up to 10 colors based upon the tie maker's template, and this may even be supplied electronically as a file containing a file in such a format as .pdf, .jpg, .bmp, .gif, etc etc. Standard PMS color numbers may be used, so as to virtually guarantee a "true color" match which might not be provided in a computer image file format. The printing may be front only, front and back, and may extend from tip to tail of the necktie.

Insert 6 may be of a material stiff enough that it would prevent flexing and thus tying of necktie 4 around the neck of the wearer if insert 6 were to extend the length of necktie 4. For that reason, insert 6 may advantageously and in the preferred embodiment is of a length less than the length of the visible surface of necktie 4 as measured from knot to tip. In one preferred embodiment, insert 6 is roughly 9 inches (roughly 23 centimeters) in length and roughly one third that width. In alternative embodiments, insert 6 may be of any dimension suitable for replicating the appearance of a ski.

Insert 6 has a raised end, the raised end is situated coterminously with the end of the visible surface of necktie 4. The elevation of raised end 6 may increase in a manner evocative, resembling or exactly identical to the elevation of a ski tip, as appropriate or necessary for the embodiment desired. The body of insert 6, which may be shorter than the raised end, the same length as the raised end or longer than the raised end depending upon the embodiment, is substantially flat and situated further up the body of necktie 4.

In use, the body of necktie 4 and insert 6 lie almost vertical, approximately flat to the chest of the wearer (although the exact contour will be determined by the clothing of the wearer).

The raised/elevated end of insert 6, however forcing the end of necktie 4 to itself, will lift the end of necktie 4 away from the wearer, causing the end of the necktie to project outwards from the torso of the wearer and giving the appearance of a ski.

In alternative embodiments, the invention may advantageously be used for advertisement of ski related equipment and services, skis, or any product shaped like a ski. For example, a necktie might contain slogans, logos, words, and images relating to skiing or the manufacturer. In yet another alternative embodiment, the invention may be printed, dyed or otherwise manufactured so as to actually present the appearance of a ski in terms of color, texture, matt, gloss, shine, design, logo and so on. Since many manufacturers of skis, ski related products, or ski shaped products tend to place their name and or logo onto their skis, an accurate representation of the ski may include the name and logo as they would normally be rendered onto a ski, as well as customary trade dress and so on.

In alternative embodiments, equipment which is used attached to skis, that is equipment such as ski bindings, brakes, foot cuffs, toe holds, safety straps and so on may be imprinted onto necktie 4 or even represented in three dimensional model form, attached to the necktie as it would be to a ski. For example, small plastic foot cuffs may be attached to a neck tie to aid the appearance of being a snow board, or elasticized miniature safety straps might be sewn on to mimic full sized safety straps. An embodiment designed to resemble a scooter might have a plastic wheel suspended from a tip of the same shape as the tip of a scooter.

Fig. 3 is a plan view of a necktie according to the first embodiment of the invention, showing the tail 8 of necktie 4. Tail 8 of necktie 4 may be shortened, for example by being manufactured to be shorter or by being sewn or glued back, in order to prevent tail 8 from

protruding beyond the tip of necktie 4 and degrading the resemblance to a ski. The shape in planform of tail 8 may also be altered, for example to a square shape as shown in Fig. 3, for the same purpose: the tail of a ski is normally square. Other shapes are also acceptable in furtherance of the goal of maintaining the ski-like appearance of necktie 4.

Fig. 4 is a side view of the insert of the invention according to a second embodiment of the invention, showing the three dimensional nature of insert 10. In this embodiment, insert 10 may be manufactured separately from any necktie and used by purchasers with any necktie they may select. Insert 10 of this embodiment as described below may be structurally identical to insert 6 of the preferred embodiment or may be adapted to easy insertion and removal from a number of neckties. This is not the presently preferred embodiment, at the present time, the preferred embodiment is as discussed previously: the tie and insert will be sewn together so that the insert cannot be removed in the best mode now contemplated, and in the preferred embodiment the insert will not be sold separately.

Insert 10 has curved end 12 and flat body 14 which combine to provide a cross-section resembling a ski. When inserted into a necktie (either as part of the preferred embodiment or as an alternative embodiment) insert 10 will cause the necktie to assume the shape of insert 10. When the necktie hangs down on the wearer's torso, insert 10 will cause it to stick out at the end of the visible area and thus resemble a ski. This embodiment of the invention may be used with neckties of any appearance, not just those resembling skis in design or planform.

In alternative embodiments, insert 10 may be attached to the back of the visible area of the necktie, rather than inserted into the necktie, however such embodiments are not the presently preferred embodiment.

For ease of manufacturing, it has been found to be advantageous to form the three dimensional ski shape of the insert after insertion into the neck tie. Thus in embodiments, the insert may be ski shaped in planform at the time of insertion. After insertion, the insert may be given its three dimensional “ski tip” shape as shown in Fig. 4 and discussed previously.

There are several methods by which this may be arranged. The insert may be reshaped by means of pressure or molding. A press or other similar device may be used for this operation, which is especially suitable for metallic inserts. Due to the inherent flexibility of the fabric of the necktie, the necktie itself is not damaged by this process.

A polymer/plastic insert may also be pressed or molded into shape in the same manner. Temperature is also of assistance in shaping the insert after insertion when a polymer/plastic insert is utilized. For example, a plastic having a first temperature at which it may be easily molded and a second, higher temperature at which it actually melts may be heated to or above the first temperature but may be kept below the second temperature. At the first temperature, the insert may be molded, then cooled. This allows a combination of pressure and temperature to be used in the operation, or either may be used alone.

The insert may be so reshaped after insertion and after being sewn or otherwise fastened in place, or it may be inserted and reshaped before sewing (in a presently not preferred embodiment) or it may be re-shaped at the same time as insertion or sewing or other operations are carried out.

In embodiments in which temperature is utilized during the after-insertion re-shaping process, it is important that the polymer/plastic and the fabric be selected so that the point at which the fabric takes damage from the heating is a higher temperature than that used to reshape

the insert within.

Fig. 5 is a cross sectional side view of the invention worn over a shirt so as to be visible, while Fig. 6 is a cross sectional side view of the invention worn over a shirt but under a coat or other garment and flattened thereby so as to be hidden.

In the presently preferred embodiments and best mode now contemplated for carrying out the invention, necktie 16 has an insert which is made of a pliable material such as thin plastic, pliable metal, carbon based composites and so on. Tail end 20 lies relatively flat down along shirt 22. However, raised end 18 stands out from the shirt prominently.

It may be advantageous to control the times when such a necktie is visible or first viewed, or it may become necessary for a wearer to conceal the necktie unexpectedly. As shown in Fig. 6, coat 24 (or another garment such as a sweater) may be worn and due to the pliable nature of the insert, raised end 18 is substantially flattened out. Thus, the insert is made of a pliable material having sufficient flexibility to allow the raised end 18 to flatten when worn under clothing. In addition, the flexibility of the insert must be sufficient to allow the tie to be tied: this flexibility may be present in either dimension, length and/or width.

A method of advertising involves manufacturing a necktie having the present invention's end resembling the tip of a ski; and wearing the necktie. It may be worn by sales representatives, as a form of endorsement by professional athletes or other ski professionals, ski shop clerks, etc. Pre-printing the necktie with a colorful image beforehand provides the desired advertising value. Examples of images include: advertising material, an image of a ski, the trademark of a ski related organizations, a trail map and combinations thereof. Any of these images and any others as well may be selected.

Since the “advertiser” or wearer need not actually carry a real ski to nonetheless appear with the image of the ski, the advertising may occur simply by wearing the necktie at a time or place when carrying a ski would be inappropriate. Examples of this include warm weather, locations far from ski trails, indoor locations, press conferences, trade shows, business meetings, sales meetings, vehicle interiors, and so on.

The disclosure is provided to allow practice of the invention by those skilled in the art without undue experimentation, including the best mode presently contemplated and the presently preferred embodiment. Nothing in this disclosure is to be taken to limit the scope of the invention, which is susceptible to numerous alterations, equivalents and substitutions without departing from the scope and spirit of the invention. The scope of the invention is to be understood from the claims accompanying this disclosure.